A STUDY OF FEMINIST ASPECTS IN THE SELECT PLAYS OF DINA MEHTA, MANJULA PADMANABHAN AND POILE SENGUPTA

A

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Introduction:

Drama is the most wonderful form of literature. It is connected with human consciousness. It has been regarded as an effective tool in the hand of the playwright to express social realism. Across the globe, dramatists have been using drama as a medium for the expression of different issues from local to global levels. Indian Drama in English had to struggle to establish its place on the canvas of world literature.It took considerable time to cross the phase of experimentation and to set its own tone. It has gained maturity with the contribution of several male and female playwrights in their unique style. In the course of time, Indian Drama in English could attract world's attention to itself.

Indian drama has a rich and age long tradition of 2000 years beginning from Bharat Muni's *Natyashastra* till date. Indian English drama has a short place on the canvas of Indian drama compared to dramas in other Indian languages. Before the arrival of the Muslims and the British in India, Bharat Muni's *Natyashastra* was the only guiding force for the classical dramatists such as Kalidas, Harsha, Bhavabhuti, Vishakadatta etc.The book, *Natyashastra* deals with the classical Indian concept of drama that covers music, dance, general aesthetics and poetics. It also depicts eight basic emotions of love, joy, anger, sadness, pride, fear, aversion and wonder. In a nutshell, 'Indian Drama' is a broad concept which covers Indian Civilization.

The Pre-Independence Phase:

Indian life was highly influenced by the English and the western civilization during pre-independence period. Indian drama also had greater effect of colonization. English education equally analyzed western drama as well as Indian classical drama. Along with the British colonizers, western drama companies stepped on the Indian soil and staged western plays at Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. These plays were arranged by the British residents of these cities. The Portuguese brought along with them a form of dance drama and Rebedoff, Russian music director staged the first modern drama at the close of the 18th century.

Prasannakumar Tagore established the first Bengali theatre 'The Hindu Theatre' in 1831 which witnessed the performances of English plays. Indian English Drama began with Krishna Mohan Banerjee's *The Persecuted* in 1831. In 1860, the

first *Proscenium* theatre was built in Kolkata. The true expedition of Indian English Drama was initiated with Michael MadhusudhanDutt's*Is This Called Civilization?* in 1871. In 1893, Ram Kinoo Duttwrote*Manipur Tragedy*. C.S.Nazir wrote *The First Parsi Baronet* in 1866 and D.M.Wadiya wrote *The Indian Heroine* in 1877. The Madras Dramatic Society (1875), The Oriental Drama Club (1882) and The SarasaVinodini Sabha (1890) were established. V.V. Srinivasa Iyengar was the most creative playwright who wrote *Blessed in a Wife* (1911), *The Paint of View* (1915), *Wait for the Stroke* (1915), *The Bricks Between* (1918), etc. The other playwrights who were equally active in drama production in south India are P.V.R. Raju, Krishnamacharya, J. Virabhadra Rao, Krishna Iyer, A. C. Krishnaswamy, J. S. R. Sarma, K.S. Ramaswami. The earlier dramatists from different regions tried western models to compose their plays.

Different forms of drama like comedy, tragedy, romances, melodrama, opera, farce and historical plays were written with mythological themes. In the beginning, the plays were written in regional languages which came under the influence of western trend of drama writing like Marxism, psychoanalysis, symbolism, and surrealism. Initially, Indian English drama suffered to get its own identity but dramatist like Ravindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, HarindranathChattopadhyaya, T.P.Kailasam, Lobo Prabhu, Bharati Sarabhai etc.contributed to the growth and development of Indian drama in English.

The first important playwright among the pre-independence dramatists is Rabindranath Tagore. He primarily wrote in Bengali and almost all his plays were later on translated into English. His well knownplays are *Sanyasi*, *the Cycle of Spring*, *Chitra,Malini*, *Sacrifice,Natir Puja*, *Red Oleanders, the King and the Queen, Kach and Devayani, Karna and Kunti, The Mother's Prayer and Amma and Vinayak.*. He is regarded as the father of modern Indian stagecraft.

The second important playwright of this period is Sri Aurobindo. He tried his hand in verse plays. He wrote five complete plays and six incomplete verse plays in English between 1891 and 1916. His popular plays are *The Viziers of Bassora*, *Perseus the Deliverer*, *Vasavadutta, Rodogune*, and *Eric the King of Norway*. His plays are an evidence of his profound knowledge of the eastern and western thoughts.

The third important name is HarindranathChattopadhyaya who was a poet as well as a dramatist. He wrote seven plays in verse, collected as *Poems and Plays* in the year 1927. These plays deal with the lives of the great Indian saints. His dramatic

venture began with *Abu Hassan* in 1918. He produced his prose plays, under the title, *Five Plays*, in 1929.

The Post-Independence Phase:

In Post-Independence period different efforts were made for the growth of Indian drama in English. The notable contributors of this period are Nissim Ezekiel, Pratap Sharma, Asif Currimbhoy and Gieve Patel. The plays of Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, and Gurucharan Das acclaimed place in the west. However, these playwrights could not get the same support in native soil.The careful attempts were made for the development of dramabut it did not get much recognition as good as poetry and fiction.

G. V. Desaniwrote*Hali* drama in poetic prose. It was played in India and at the Watergate Theatre in London in 1950. The play, *Hali* shows the theme of love and passion with symbolic and original expression. Later on, Lakhan Deb wrote three verse plays *Tiger's Claw*, *Murder at the Prayer Meeting* and *Vivekanand*. They are historical verse plays. Tiger's Claw is based on the historical incident of the murder of Bijapur general Afzal Khan by Shivaji, while Murder at the Prayer Meeting projects the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Gurucharan Das also picks up episodes from Indian history, but he does not try to connect them with the modern situation. He ends up with the coherent presentation of events. His *Larins Sahib* finely outlines the decolonization of English language in the post-colonial period. His play,*Mira* was very successfully executed as a ballet in Bombay as well as in New York. The last in the collection of his *Three Plays* (2001) is, *Jakhoo Hill*. Another playwright whose contribution is noteworthy in postmodern context is Pratap Sharma. *A Touch of Brightness* (1968) and *The Professor Has a War Cry* (1970) are his two stage-worthy plays. The next contributor is Nissim Ezekiel, well-known poet and a dramatist. He has five plays to his credit. His collection of plays-*Three Plays* was published in 1969. *Nalini,Marriage Poem* and *The Sleep Walkers* mirror the vanity and futility of urban middle class. Gieve Patel has written three full-length plays set in south Gujarat – an area where Parsis have settled. The last play *Mister Behram* (1998) deals with Parsi life and character, and has ethnicity, class-consciousness and homosexuality as themes.

Asif Currimbhoy is a prolific playwright of the Post-Independence phase. By publishing around thirty plays, he earned international fame. His well-known plays are*The Tourist Mecca*, *The Doldrummers*, *Thorns on a Canvas*, *The Restaurant*, *The*

Dumb Dancer, *The Captives*, *Goa*, *The Hungry Ones*, *Monsoon*, *An Experiments with Truth, Inquilab, The Refugee, Sonar Bangla, The Miracle seed* and *The Dissident MLA* were produced between 1959 to 1974.

Other important plays during this period include *The Last Wedding Anniversary* by Shiv K. Kumar and *Sita* by Snehalata Reddy, *The Goddess Speaks* by V.K.Gokak, *Towards Marriage* and *The Carnival* by M.V.RamaSarma. Indian drama in English witnessed far-reaching developments in the history of Indian drama in English.Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh, Habib Tanvir, and Mahasweta Devi contributed in the first half of 1970s.They used Indian legends, customs, rituals, conventions, folklores, rites, myths and history in their plays. Many dramatists also made bold innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both thematic concerns and technical dexterities. They opened a new vista for the regional works at national level languages. They successfully and effectively produced many plays at national level. The contemporary successful vernacular dramas were translated into English either by the dramatists themselves or by others. The English translations got huge accomplishment in theatres. Such translated plays from the local languages offered universal aspects of human life, thus provided wide scope for Indian drama to enjoy success at national level.

The first great dramatist belonging to the new generation is Vijay Tendulkar. Hestarted his career as a journalist, but turned to drama later on. He provided a fresh impulse and leadership to Marathi as well as Indian English drama. He has written twenty-eight full-length plays and twenty-one act plays. He has written all his plays first in Marathi, which later translated into English. *The Silence! The Court is in Session* (1968), *Ghasiram Kotwal* (1972),*Kanyadan*(1982),*Sukhram Binder* (1972), *The Vultures, Kamala* (1982) etc are his well-known plays. His focus is always on the middle class society. His plays agitate the sentiments of people with the theme of isolation of the individual and their conflict with the antagonistic surroundings.

Badal Sircar is another important contributor.He is a Bengali playwright. His prestigious dramatic career started with humorous play, *Solution X*. His earlier plays are *Evan Inderjit* (1962), *That Other History*(1964) and *There Is No End* (1971). Evan Inderjit is a story of a playwright who makes a vain attempt of writing a play. In the play *There's No Need*, Sircar states that we are all accused and share the burden of guilt.

Mohan Rakesh is another important playwright who presented total absence of communication between one man and another in contemporary life. Though he wrote in Hindi, his influence cannot be ignored in Indian English drama. On account of incomparable dramatic congruity, his plays were translated in English and other local languages. *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* –in English,*One Day in Ashadha* (1958), LeharonKeRajhansa -in English,*The Great Swans of the Waves*, (1963) and *AdheAdheere* –in English,*Half-way House* (1969) are his main plays.

Girish Karnad is the most pioneering and multifaceted dramatist belonging to a generation that remodeled Indian English Drama. He is a playwright, a poet, an actor, a director, a critic, a translator and a cultural administrator. His plays effectively display the use of indigenous subjects, characters, language and Folk traditions. His dramatic output includes *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1971), *HittinaHunja* (1980) published as *Bali: The Sacrifice*, *Nagamandala: A Play with a Cobra* (1990), *Tale-Danda* (1993), *The Fire and the Rain* (1998) and two Monologues: *Flowers and Broken Images* (2005) and *Wedding Album* (2008). Most of his plays are the products of fine blend of the conventional and contemporarydramatic forms and content.

The next outstanding contributor is Mahesh Dattani. He is the first and only Indian English playwright to be honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award for his drama collection titled *Final Solutions and Other Plays* in 1998. His first play is *Where There Is a Will*. His other well-known plays are *Dance Like a Man*(1989),*Tara*(1990), *Bravely Fought the Queen*(1991), *Final Solutions*(1993),*The Murder That Never Was*(2000), *Thirty Days in September*(2001),*Brief Candle*(2009), *Where Did Leave My Purda*(2012), and *The Big Fat City* (2012). Mahesh Dattani stands distinct from other contemporary playwrights of his age in utilizing theatre as a powerful instrument for mirroring the tart realities in the male-oriented society.

Women Playwrights:

During the last half of the twentieth century, women playwrights have also contributed remarkably to the development of Indian drama in English. Their plays mainly focus on social issues in the contemporary society. Women's plays frequently present socio-domestic inter-personal conflicts, which may not look significant to male dominated ideology. The earliest plays by women were written in Bengali, Urdu and Marathi languages. Swarnakumari Devi (1855-1932) and Rasheed Jahan (1905-52) projected the social evils in their Urdu and Bengali plays respectively. The

foremostamong the few women playwrights in English are Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954), Bharati Sarabhai (b. 1912). *Gold Mohur Time* (1930) by Cornelia Sorabji is the first drama in English by an Indian woman. Bharati Sarabhai was a modern woman playwright during the colonial era of Indian English Drama. She wrote two plays. *The Well of the People* (1943) is a symbolic-poetic play. It is based on Gandhian principles. *Two Women* (1952) is a realistic play. It is written in prose. It probes the private world of a sensitive individual. In both the plays, she interprets old beliefs and customs in the modern context.

Mrs. Swarnakumari Devi Ghosal belongs to the great Tagore family. She is another early women playwright who attempted play writing along with short stories and novels. Her *Princess Kalyani* is a three acts play with a Prologue and an Epilogue. The themes from the epics become the subject of the plays by women playwrights such as Nalini Mohan Chakravarthy, Kamala Subramanian and ManjeriIsvaran. Nalini was influenced by the *Bhagavat* in her play *Krishna* (1937). ManjeriIsvaran's*Yama and Yami* (1948) shows dialogue in poetic prose, with a prologue and an epilogue, showing the guilty love of Yami for her brother. Another crucial playwright is Mrinalini Sarabhai (1928) is a renowned Indian classical dancer, choreographer and instructor. Women writers often draw inspiration from the history of the valour. S. Janaki is the next woman playwright who conceptualizes some events of the fights of the Rajputs with the Mughals. Her three-act play *The Siege of Chitor* deals with Akbar's final successful bid to overcome the formidable Chitor fort. Smt. K. B. Thakur's *Mother and Child* is a three-act play which deals with the tragic story of Karna of the Mahabharata. The playwright concentrates on a few crucial parts of Karna's pitiful life.

Among the contemporary women playwrights Dina Mehta, Poile Sengupta and Manjula Padmanabhan-the playwrights under study-are the rising voices. They have laid foundation of social transformation through their dramas. They are among very few women playwrights whose development has been documented well in otherwise negligible presence of women playwrights in the print medium. Their plays are published in anthologies such as *Women Centre Stage* (Routledge, 2010) and *Body Blows: Women*, *Violence and Survival* (Seagull Books, 2000). Their contributions have made Indian drama more interesting by their most productive exercise of imagination. The common thing about Dina Mehta, Poile Sengupta and Manjula Padmanabhan is that they are multifaceted personalities. They are the writers who have been successfully trying their hands at play writing along with other modes

of literary expressions and won prestigious awards for their plays. They have written more than twenty plays ranging from full length plays to skits which are reflexive, honest, often violent and disturbing. They have experimented with the style and form to reveal just and appealing picture of society through their relevant themes. Their plays are the proofs of their enlightenment and rationality. They are ahead of the contemporary dramatic development. The perspective on their plays makes it clear that their plays deal with the universal human emotions including their concern for women at core.

Dina Mehta: A Profile

Dina Keki Mehta, the dramatist, novelist, short-story writer and editor, was born in Pune on 2nd October, 1928. After completing her B.A. in English literature from Elphinston College, Mumbai, she started a career in journalism. She had been with till she died on 4th February, 2009.

Dina Mehta worked as an editor of the magazine 'Sabras' and 'Kaiser-e-Hind', English monthly published from Mumbai. She was associated with the Illustrated Weekly of India as its fiction editor from 1976 to 1983.She tried her hand in short story and drama. She also contributed as the English drama critic for Mumbai's tabloid Mid-Day, and was on the writer's panel of Gentleman magazine in 1981. She worked with the news papers the Times of India to Debonair. She held the position as a senior editor at Parsinama and Voyage.

Dina Mehta contributed to Indian writing in English through her dramas, novels and short stories for last six long decades. As a creative writer, She is the most original and innovative. She won the first prize for her story 'Survivors' in an all-India short story competition organized by Deccan Herald (Bangalore) in 1982. In her maiden anthology of short story, *The Other Woman and Other Stories* (1992), she presents contemporary Indian woman in a confused mood, looking doubtfully at the traditional values.Her second anthology of short story is *Miss Menon did not Believe in Magic and other Stories*. Some of the stories from this collection were read on BBC Radio-4 from 1995 to 1997 and even presented as a theatrical experiment by AlyquePadamsee in Mumbai.She wrote two novels*; Some Take Lover* and *Mila in Love.Some Take Lover* focuses on the divided loyalties of two generations of Parsi family during the Quit India Movement of 1940s lead by Mahatma Gandhi. Her second novel *Mila in Love* (2003) is a perceptive tale set in the contemporary setting and has Parsi protagonist in the form of the disobedient lover.

As a playwright, Dina Mehta has clear vision for English theatre in India. It is a fact that she is better known as a fiction writer but she excelled in both fiction and drama forms. Actually, her literary career began with scripts that she wrote for All India Radio, Mumbai. Later she went on to win the first prize for her radio play *Brides are not for Burning* in an international competition sponsored by the BBC in 1979, which was published in1993 as a two-act play. Other honourinclude a second prize for the three act play *The Myth Makers* in the First All-India Sultan Padamse Play-writing Competition in 1968 published in 'Enact'- a drama journal in 1969. She got an award for *Tiger Tiger* in the Second All-India Sultan Padamse Playwriting Competition in 1978. *Tiger Tiger* is one of her much loved creative works. It is based on the life of Tipu Sultan, the tiger of Mysore, formed out of the historical data available in BhagwanGidwani's*The Sward of Tipu Sultan*. Other plays of *Mehta like Friday Father* (1985) and *Sisters Like You* (1996) have been staged by amateur drama groups in Mumbai. *Sisters Like You* deals with feminine experience and takes readers and spectators into those inner recesses of women's beings which are rarely visible to scrutiny with bare eyes. Her play *When One Plus One Makes Nine* (1982) was broadcast on Mumbai Doordarshan Channel. It propagates the theme of family planning. *Getting Away with Murder* is her last play as a dramatist, which was published in Body Blows: Women, Violence and Survival – Three Plays published in 2000. Her plays *The Myth Makers*, *Brides are not for Burning* and *Getting Away with the Murder* exhibit issues concerning women. These plays voice her resistance to social pressures imposed on her as woman writer.

Manjula Padmanabhan: A Profile

Manjula Padmanabhan is an artist, a cartoonist, a playwright, novelist and short story writer. She lives in Newport, RI in the US. She also has a home in New Delhi, India. She was born in Delhi in 1953.She spent most of her her childhood outside India in different countries like Sweden, Pakistan and Thailand. She was brought up in a free atmosphere by a diplomat father. Therefore, she was unknown to any kind of restrictions on the freedom of a girl.After the family came to India she started studying in different boarding schools, and later on, she graduated from Elphinston College, Bombay. It is here, she faced the realities of living in an Indian city, which frustrated her. She found herself surrounded by a very traditional society. She had to argue with her mother on the length of her hair, on dress codes etc.

Manjula's artistic works like *Same & Different*, *Where's That Cat?*,*I Am Different*, etc. are picture books for children.*Unprincess* (2005) includes three stories about three funny, feisty and fearless girls. *Astro-Nuts* (2015), which was originally published by Scholastic India in "Plays for Schools" entitled as *General Assembly*. *Double Talk* (2005), is a collection of SUKI cartoon strips which was regularly published in the Sunday Observer, Bombay during 1982-1986 and succeeding in the Pioneer, New Delhi. *Hot Death*, *Cold Soup* (1996) and *Kleptomania* (2004) are collections of short stories. Her major themes are dowry, murder, suicide, molestation of women, girl teasing, revenge for being treated as the other woman, a TV journalist's fight for her cause, determination to commit Satti, organ selling, pack rapes, etc.Apart from short stories, she has three novels to her credit. *The novel Getting There* (1999), *Escape* (2008) and *The Island of Lost Girls* (2015).

As a playwright, Manjula Padmanabhan has elevated the status of Indian English Drama to its height of success. She has written about half-a-dozen plays. Manjula's first play *Lights Out* was first staged at Prithvi Theatre in Mumbai in 1986. She shot into glory as a playwright when her play *Harvest* was chosen from about 1500 listings from 75 nations to come first in the Alexander S. Onassis Award for Theatre in September 1997. *Harvest* has been performed as readings and on stage in several countries, most notably in Athens (in Greek) in 2000, and in New York's La MaMa Theatre, in 2006.Her next play is an album titled *The Sextet* carrying six of her short plays, including "Against her will" and "Bedbugs" which were published in 2001. Another plays, *Mating Game* (2004) and *Stain* (2004) prove her commitment to the genre. In fact, her The Mating Game Show was presented in September 2004 in New York by SALAAM (South Asian League of Artists in America). Her several plays have been made into TV serials and films.

Poile Sengupta: A Profile

Poile Sengupta has made a significant mark in Indian writing in English by her plays. Poile Sengupta is her pen-name. Ambika Gopalakrishnan is her real name. She is especially, known as a writer for children and a promising English playwright writing in English. She was born in 1948. She is also a poet, a short story writer, a novelist, an accomplished film and theatre actor and a member of the National School of Drama. She did post graduation from Delhi University and began her career as a teacher of English at school and later on in college.She renders her valued expertise in the fields like education, communication, as well as in language skills.She knows

Malayalam, Tamil, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, and English. Knowledge of multiple languages has helped her to have a more comprehensive view of the Indian milieu and create a wide variety of authentic characters. She is a reputed theatre personality of Bangalore and has her own theatre group named Theatre Club. She is an actor of the film *The Outhouse* which received an award.

She has written columns for children in the Deccan Herald (Bangalore), The Times of India (Bangalore), and in Midday (Mumbai). *The Book Trust* and *Puffin* have published her children's fiction. *A Woman Speaks* is her collection of poetry published in 1991. Recently in 2012 her short-story, *Ammulu* was shortlisted for the Commonwealth short story prize. She wrote her first novel I*nga* at the age of 60. It is published in October 2014. Her first full-length play, *Mangalam,* got the award for the most socially relevant theme in the Hindu-Madras Players play scripts competition in 1993. The Department of Culture, Government of India gave her senior fellowship to script plays for children for the years 1999 and 2000. *Good Heavens!* (2006) is her anthology of one-act plays for children. She has also printed a full-length children's musical-*Yavamajakka!*

She has inherited the art from her family members like her great-grandfather, and her father. Her father was actively involved in Malayalam theatre. Her mother took her to see Tamil plays. Her husband has been passionate about theatre all his life and he is the constant source of knowledge of theatre to her. Her association with the Bangalore Little Theatre has also helped her learn from the senior theatre personalities. Her plays *Spoke Shoorpuakha*, *So Said Shakuni*, and *Alipha*, were staged in Delhi for a well known theatre group - Yatrik. Her plays are all distinctive, yet one can discern the overarching concern for women's issues—in family, society, political systems, and culture—that informs her plays. To be a feminist in Indian context is often equated with a radical variety of feminism. She is a writer with the consciousness of a woman. She agrees that she cannot escape her gender, but it not her sole identity. She feels her women characters live in a troubled, patriarchal world, but they are strong and capable of speaking and acting for themselves.

Her popular plays are *Mangalam* (1993), *Inner Laws* (1994), *Keats Was* a *Tuber* (1996), *Samara's Song* (1999), *Alipha*(2001), and *Thus SpakeShoorpanakha*, *So Said Shakuni* (2001). These six plays are published by Routledge under the collection – Women Centre Stage in 2010. *A Pretty Business* (1995) and *Collages* (1998) are other plays to her credit which are also set in Indian contexts.

Objectives of Study:

The aims and objectives of proposed research are as follows:

1. To study the place and position of women in male dominated Indian society represented by Dina Mehta, Manjula Padmanabhan, and Poile Sengupta in their select plays.
2. To project feminine sensibility of women characters in the select plays.
3. To depict feminist sensibility of women who reacts as revolutionary, rebellious, social-aware, liberal, rational, and aggressive for equal rights and in search of self-entity.
4. To analyze the hegemonic power structure of Indian society where women are treated as a mere object and placed as marginalized one.
5. To investigate the place of women in Indian family.
6. To understand female psyche in the select plays in relation with social structure where they live.

Scope and Limitation:

The broad area of the present study is to studythe feminist aspects. It is significant to study the plays from this point of view as it will give the readers a complete insight to understand the nature and temperament of the society. The present study will be confined to following select plays and dramatists:

Dina Mehta	1. *Getting Away with Murder*
	2. *Brides are not for Burning*
Manjula Padmanabhan	1. *Lights Out*
	2. *Harvest*
Poile Sengupta	1. *Mangalam*
	2. *Inner Laws*

Review of Literature:

The researcher has consulted previous research studies in order to avoid repetition of the area of the study. The following research works are consulted by the researcher:

1. Research article entitled "Exhibiting Resistance: In Dina Mehta's Plays Brides Are Not for Burning and Getting Away with Murder" published by K.V. Rosha,

Assistant Professor, Department of Science and Humanities, Ahalia School of Engineering and Technology, Palakkad, Kerala.

The present research paper analyses the condition of women in the male dominating society. Dina Mehta in her plays 'Brides are not for Burning' and 'Getting Away with Murder' focuses on women issues. This paper attempts to explore the resistance upheld by the playwright through her plays against the age old beliefs and tradition prevailing in the Indian Society.

2. Ph. D. thesis entitled "Women and Protest a Study of Select Plays of Mahasweta Devi Manjula Padmanabhan and Dina Mehta" submitted by Warwantkar Anita Madhavrao to Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University in 2017.

   The present research work is an attempt to study the protest in Mahasweta Devi, Manjula Padmanabhan and Dina Mehta s select plays. Indian English women plays are unexplored due to the masculine supremacy. Obviously, their plays are not equally focused as compared to the males. Her voice is suppressed under the existence of patriarchal system. Her perceptions, views are kept aside. She becomes a mute spectator due to the gender discrimination. This prolonged discrimination results in the form of Theatre of protest which is skillfully utilized by the Indian English women playwrights.

3. Ph. D. thesis entitled "Perspectives on Contemporary Indian Women Playwrights A Study with Special Reference to the Plays of Dina Mehta Poile Sengupta and Manjula Padmanabhan" by Bhavsar, Vipul Keshavlal submitted to Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University in 2017.

The present research deals with the canvas of Indian Women Playwrights with special reference to Dina Mehta, Poile Sengupta and Manjula Padmanabhan who are multifaceted personalities. They are the writers who have been successfully trying their hands at play writing along with other modes of literary expressions and won prestigious awards for their plays. Their canvas of creativity is big. They use dramatic medium as a mode of expression of the contemporary reality.

4. Research article entitled "Self- resistance in Dina Mehta's Getting Away with Murder" by L. Jeevitha & Dr. G. Subramanian, published in *Home* Vol-2, Issue-6, Nov. - Dec. 2017.

   The present research paper portrays Dina Mehta's *Getting Away With Murder* which deals with various issues like child abuses, rape, female feticide, and blind superstitious belief. The play seeks to portray the lives of three friends Mallika, Sonali and Raziya who are connected perhaps by the strain of suffering that they undergo in the hands of male hypo critic and dominating human.

5. Research article entitled "The Voice of Protest: Burning Issues in Dina Mehta's Brides Are Not for Burning" published by S. Devika, HHMSPBNSS College for Women, Trivandrum, India.
   The present paper deals with the crimes committed against women in the name of tradition and culture in a male-dominated society. Dina Mehta raises her voice in protest against a host of crimes against women such as the evil of dowry, female foeticide, rape, child abuse, subjugation of women, and so on.
6. The research work entitled "Representation of Gender Bias: A Study of Three Indian English Women Playwrights" by Megha Jain.

The present research analyzes how gender is portrayed and how gender roles are predetermined and defined in plays by Manjula Padmanabhan, Poile Sengupta and Dina Mehta.

7. M. Phil dissertation entitled "Struggle and Expression: Selected Plays by Manjula Padmanabhan, Poile Sengupta and Dina Mehta" by Minakshi Kaushik, M.Phil English,Jamia Millia Islamia.

   This dissertation deals with an attempt of the dramatists who have taken up contemporary social and political situations for analysis.

8. Ph. D. Thesis entitled "The Plays of Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta A Study in Spatial and Gender perspectives" submitted by Pandey, Rachana to Banaras Hindu University in 2017.

   The present study intends to make an inquiry into the construction of gendered space with the critical study of the selected plays of Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta. Their plays are focused on the urban, educated, Indian middle-class society of the post-1980s.

9. The research work entitled "Violence In Manjula Padmanabhan's selected Plays *Harvest* And *Light's Out*" by Dr. G. Subramanian & L .Jeevitha, Assistant Professor & Master of Philosophy (Student), Department of English, Government Arts College, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.

   The present study aims to explore the playwright's projection of violence in her selected plays. The paper also projects the type of violence's male come across to make their survival. And it also shows, how the bonds which used to link one human being with another are gradually weakening. Man, especially belonging to the middle class, though

aware of his duty as a social being, avoids it, living contentedly in his self-imposed bondages.

10. Ph. D. Thesis entitled "Performing violence representation of women and violence in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar Mahesh Dattani Manjula Padmanabhan and Dina Mehta" submitted by Sarmah, Saurabhi to Gauhati University in 2012.
The present work deals with violence against women committed in the contemporary society.

Research problem:

1. What is the status of women in the Indian society?
2. What is the reason behind women's exploitation?
3. Whether women are equally treated with their male counterparts?
4. What is the place of women in the so-called modern society?

Hypothesis:

The present study aims at studying feminist crisis in the plays of Dina Mehta, Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta. The proposed research focuses on following hypotheses:

1. It is believed in the Indian society that woman essentially need male support for her smooth life. They have secondary place even in the modern society.
2. It is the tragedy of woman since ancient to modern times that she has been used as only a tool to fulfil all demands in family and society.
3. It is one of the principles of the male - dominated society that woman must do household duties without any complain. In addition, she must follow the principle of chastity, customs, and norms in the family.
4. Emotions, feelings, zeal of love, her quest for perfection, her futile effort of being self-reliant, the spirit of defense has less importance in social structure.
5. Feminist sensibility in the select plays underlines women's striving for acquiring freedom, equality, and privileges as a human being.

Data Collection:

Data for the present research work will be collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources will be the select plays of Dina Mehta, Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta. The secondary sources will consist of research articles published in research journals of National and International repute. In addition to this, websites of different reputed libraries will be consulted along with INFLIBNET and Shodhganga.

Research Methodology:

The research methodology for the present research study comprises exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, elaborative, analytical, interpretative and analogical. It will comprise reading the published works by and on Dina Mehta, Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta. Emphasis will be laid on studying, understanding and analyzing the primary sources. Criticism related to the playwrights and plays understudy will be incorporated as references. Besides, web sources will also be consulted and utilized. MLA Style edition IX will be followed and applied.

The Significance of Research Work:

The present study aims to find out feminist crisis of women in the select plays of Dina Mehta, Manjula Padmanabhan and Poile Sengupta. This study will help to understand the hegemonic power structure of Indian society.It is also significant as it helps to understand the female psyche in the select plays. The study is also important as it focuses on the basic form of representation of life in the real sense and how it is marginalized by society.

Tentative Chapter Scheme:

The present research study consists of five chapters which are as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Feminist Aspects in Dina Mehta's *Getting Away with Murder*and*Brides are not for Burning*

Chapter III: Feminist Aspects in Manjula Padmanabhan's*Lights Out*and *Harvest*

Chapter IV: Feminist Aspects in Poile Sengupta's *Mangalam andInner Laws*

Chapter V: Conclusion

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